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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	ED-01	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00
	HHS-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SS-00	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	R-00
	EPAE-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/012W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5296
INFO AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
ASEAN COLLECTIVE
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000156

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL SOCI VM DPOL HUMANR

SUBJECT: TEACHING THE PARTY ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

1. SUMMARY. A HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER AT THE MAIN PARTY SCHOOL HAS FOR THE LAST SEVEN YEARS BEEN UNDERTAKING A UNIQUE EFFORT TO EDUCATE OFFICIALS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL LEGAL
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CONCEPTS RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS LONG-TERM PROCESS MERITS OUR ATTENTION AND POSSIBLY SUPPORT, DESPITE ONGOING DIFFERENCES OF VALUES AND APPROACHES TO THIS DELICATE TOPIC.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE HO CHI MINH POLITICAL ACADEMY -- THE CENTRAL PARTY SCHOOL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM (CPV) -- HAS SINCE 1994 INCLUDED A RESEARCH CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. ITS DIRECTOR, DR. CAO DUC THAI, TOLD POL/C ON JANUARY 23 THAT ITS MAJOR FUNCTIONS ARE TO:
-- CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS, BASED PRIMARILY ON INTERNATIONAL LAW;
-- UNDERTAKE RESEARCH PROJECTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS "AROUND THE WORLD," INCLUDING IN THE U.S.;
-- TEACH STUDENTS AT THE ACADEMY -- THE ALREADY ELITE AND THE UP-AND-COMING OF THE CPV, AT NATIONAL AS WELL AS PROVINCIAL LEVELS -- ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES AND THEIR INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS;
-- DISSEMINATE HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTS TO TARGETED GROUPS WITHIN VIETNAM;
-- ADVISE THE GVN AND CPV ON LEGISLATION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS; AND,
-- STRENGTHEN COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS, NGOS, AND UNIVERSITIES.

3. THE CENTER CURRENTLY HAS AN IN-HOUSE STAFF OF 16, INCLUDING FOUR WITH DOCTORATES AND SIX WITH MASTER'S DEGREE, MOSTLY IN INTERNATIONAL LAW. (ONE RESEARCHER/LECTURER WHO SAT IN ON THE MEETING HAD AN LL M -- MASTER'S IN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW -- FROM A UNIVERSITY IN SWEDEN.) ANOTHER TWO DOZEN OR SO RESEARCHERS ARE ON
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TEMPORARY LOAN FROM OTHER GVN AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE MINISTRIES OF JUSTICE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND PUBLIC SECURITY, AS WELL AS THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, DR. THAI SAID.

4. ALL STUDENTS AT THE ACADEMY (USUALLY 2-3,000 IN ANY GIVEN YEAR) IN PRINCIPLE TAKE ONE COURSE ON HUMAN RIGHTS THEORY IN INTERNATIONAL LAW, ACCORDING TO DR. THAI (WHO TEACHES THE COURSE), BUT THE CENTER DOES NOT NOW OFFER A BROADER CURRICULUM. IT PUBLISHES A REGULAR BULLETIN WITH ARTICLES BY ITS RESEARCHERS; DR. THAI PROMISED HE WOULD ASK FOR PERMISSION TO INCLUDE EMBASSY ON ITS DISTRIBUTION. HE EXPRESSED A HOPE EVENTUALLY TO TRANSFORM THE BULLETIN INTO A MAINLINE JOURNAL, WHILE ADMITTING THE DIFFICULTY IN SUSTAINING SUCH AN EFFORT ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS. UNESCO UNDERWRITES ANOTHER OF THE CENTER'S PROGRAMS, PUBLISHING HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTS AIMED AT CHILDREN, HE NOTED.

15. AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE CENTER HAD ADVISED THE GVN AND CPV ON LEGISLATION, DR. THAI CITED EVOLVING NATIONAL POLICY ON PEOPLE WITH AIDS. HE NOTED THE REAL PROBLEM OF SOCIETAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THIS POPULATION AND THE NEED FOR LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THEIR LEGITIMATE AND EQUAL RIGHTS BASED ON THE CONSTITUTION.

16. DR. THAI CLAIMED THAT THE "SENIOR PARTY LEADERSHIP" WAS VERY INTERESTED IN THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, HENCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS CENTER. HE NOTED SPECIFICALLY THAT MANY OTHER GVN OFFICIALS AND CPV CADRES DID NOT YET UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE OR THE LEGAL BASIS -- IN BOTH INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL TERMS -- FOR THESE RIGHTS. THE CHALLENGE FOR THE CENTER, HE SAID, WAS TO HELP IMPROVE THE

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LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS GENERALLY AND SPECIFICALLY IN VIETNAM. HE DESCRIBED THE CENTER AS THE "UNIQUE AGENCY" IN VIETNAM TO UNDERTAKE THIS TASK. HE CLAIMED THAT INTEREST AND UNDERSTANDING IN HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN VIETNAM WAS "INCREASING" AND ATTITUDES OF OFFICIALS WERE GRADUALLY MORE "POSITIVE" AND "OPEN." HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, DIFFERING LEVELS OF INTEREST AMONG OFFICIALS.

17. WHEN ASKED ABOUT FREQUENT COMPLAINTS FROM VIETNAMESE ABOUT "INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS" WHEN OUTSIDE OBSERVERS COMMENTED ON ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN VIETNAM, DR. THAI CITED A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN RESEARCH AND REPORTING ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AND ACTUAL INTERVENTION IN A LOCAL SITUATION. HE CLAIMED TO BE A FAITHFUL READER OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON VIETNAM, AND PROMISED TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK FROM THIS YEAR'S REPORT. HE SAID THAT THE CENTER HAD NO/NO CONTACTS WITH INTERNATIONAL GROUPS SUCH AS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL OR HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, WHILE UNDERTAKING EXCHANGES WITH GROUPS IN AUSTRALIA, SWEDEN, AND DENMARK.

18. WHILE ADMITTING THAT US AND VIETNAMESE PERCEPTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WERE OFTEN AT ODDS, HE NONETHELESS CLAIMED THAT OUR DIFFERENCES ON THIS ISSUE WERE NOT REALLY SO GREAT. THE PRIMARY DIFFERENCE RELATED TO LIMITATIONS ON INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS, WHICH WERE STILL IMPORTANT TO BOTH PEOPLES. FOR

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	HHS-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
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	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SS-00	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	R-00
	EPAE-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/012W			

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R 240226Z JAN 02
FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
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EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT IN THE U.S., EVEN IN THE WAKE OF SEPTEMBER 11, PEOPLE COULD BUY AND WEAR T-SHIRTS WITH OSAMA BIN LADEN'S IMAGE ON IT, WHILE THIS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED IN

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VIETNAM. (ACCORDING TO A JANUARY 22 REUTERS REPORT, POLICE IN THE SOUTHERN COAST CITY OF NHA TRANG SEIZED A BATCH OF SUCH T-SHIRTS, WITH ONE POLICE INSPECTOR QUOTED AS SAYING "WE HAVE TO STEP IN TO STOP THE SPREAD OF THIS IMAGE OF TERROR.") DR. THAI NONETHELESS POINTED WITH PRIDE TO THE MAJOR STRIDES IN PERSONAL LIBERTIES OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS IN VIETNAM.

19. POL/C ENCOURAGED DR. THAI TO INTENSIFY INTERACTION BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE CENTER AND NOTED AMBASSADOR BURGHARDT'S INTEREST IN VISITING THE CENTER AT A LATER DATE. DR. THAI ACCEPTED WITH ALACRITY AND SAID THAT HE WOULD VALUE SUCH ENHANCED CONTACTS.

110. COMMENT: THE VIETNAMESE VIEWPOINT ON HUMAN RIGHTS REMAINS WIDELY DIVERGENT FROM OUR OWN, AND RESPECT FOR CORE VALUES SADLY INADEQUATE IN BOTH POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION.

IT IS NONETHELESS STRIKING THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WITHIN THE
VERY BOWELS OF THE CPV WHO ARE STEADILY IMPLANTING THE
CONCEPT THAT HUMAN RIGHTS DO NOT STEM FROM AN ALIEN-IMPOSED
VALUE SYSTEM, AND THAT RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS DEEPLY
IMBEDDED IN INTERNATIONAL LAW AND IN VIETNAM'S OWN EXPLICIT
COMMITMENTS TO VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND ITS OWN
CONSTITUTION. THAT THE CPV ITSELF IS FOSTERING THIS
INTERNAL REVOLUTION OF THINKING PERHAPS REVEALS AN INHERENT
RECOGNITION THAT BLUSTER AND DENIAL OVER HUMAN RIGHTS
ALLEGATIONS ARE NOT IN VIETNAM'S LONG-TERM INTEREST, AND
THAT ONLY A CAREFUL LONG-TERM EDUCATION CAMPAIGN CAN
ADEQUATELY CHANGE THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF BOTH OFFICIALS AND
CITIZENS THROUGHOUT THE NATION. WHILE THIS SMACKS OF
"INTERNAL PEACEFUL EVOLUTION," IT IS A PROCESS WE SHOULD
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MONITOR CAREFULLY AND, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, OFFER OUR
ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT.
BURGHARDT

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